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No. 473



The man stepped into the room and closed the door softly behind him.

Gold Bullet Sport; OR, THE KNIGHTS OF THE OVERLAND.

BY HON. WM. F. CODY,
(BUFFALO BILL.)

CHAPTER IV.

A THIRD SURPRISE.

In a pleasant room of the Central City House a woman paced the floor, a low trill rustling after her like the waves upon the beach.

The face was slender, beautiful as it was strong and sad, and the miniature was a perfect like-ness of the maiden, though taken perhaps several years before, for it seemed a trifle younger; but there were the same red-gold hair braided in heavy coils, the same black eyes with their sweeping lashes, delicate pointed brows, and ruby lips, set with even rows of small, dimpled, transparent teeth.

Upon the hotel books the maiden was registered as Miss Violet Markham, of New York city, and she had told Judge Wolf that she had been brought up for the stage, both as a vocalist and actress, and had some skill in the scenes with which to prosecute a search for a person said to be in the mines of Colorado, and who held a secret regarding her parentage which she wished to know.

When robbed by Captain Satan, she had been in despair; but now she had more gold than ever she had possessed before, owing to the generosity of the miners, and she was free to continue her search once more.

This was all that was known of the lovely singer, and other questions were asked her, for her face seemed a guarantee for her truthfulness; though, when it was suggested that a woman had come into the basket of his contribution, a diamond-studded likeness of the maiden herself, and that Dead Shot—or "Tarleton," as he was registered at the Central City House—had fainted away when he caught sight of her face, there were some who believed that she had a history that was in some way connected with his sad fate.

Now, as she paced the room with graceful sweep, the brows were contracted in deep and painful thought, and the lips moved in low utterance:

"Strange—oh, so very strange! I cannot account for it, and this doubt as to who and what they are must be connected with my past."

"Hugh Lambert they call him—a young miner who works a claim in the mountains, has universal bad luck, and is as poor as poverty, they say; yet he had this miniature of myself, set in gold and studded with diamonds worth as much as that pile of gold you see."

"Where did he get it? and who can he be?"

"And the other—Dead Shot they call him; the man who behaved so bravely, and beat off the bandits of the mountains, and who is a silent, silent-looking man, and a gambler; they say, though no one seems to know much regarding him; he fainted dead away when he saw my face. Who can he be?"

"Tarleton is the name on the register, but that tells me nothing."

"I must see these two men, and know why it is

that my face moves them so. First, I will go to the miners in the mountains, for he had my picture. I can ride there on horseback, and one of those good miners will guide me; I will go down at once and make arrangements for an early start, for the storm is about over."

So saying, she left her room, locking the door after her, and descended to the hotel-office, where Judge Wolf sat, conversing with a tall man, well-dressed, and with heavy beard, nearly concealing his face.

Both looked up as Violet Markham entered the little room, and the tall man sprung to his feet, his face livid, while from his lips broke the cry:

"God in Heaven! from the very grave!"

With a cry of pain, he sprang from the room, down the stairs, and out into the storm, and was seen no more.

"Miss Markham, your presence in our little town seems to have moved three men deeply," said Judge Wolf, gazing upon the maiden with a look of surprise.

"Judge Wolf, who was that man?"

"His name is Colonel Darke, at least he is known as such here. He owns the Deadman's Mine, a few miles from here, and must get a good thing out of it, as he always has plenty of money. Do you know him?"

"I do not remember ever to have seen him before, and there certainly seems a mystery in the behavior of three men to-night at sight of me—a mystery I am anxious to solve, and I wish to ask you if I can get a saddle-horse and guide in the morning, as I desire to go to the cabin of this Hugh Lambert, who so generously contributed my own likeness to his to-night!"

"You shall have a horse, Miss Markham, and a guide can be easily found for you."

"I thank you, Judge Wolf. Good-night, sir, and please have me an early breakfast," and Violet Markham was seen from the room.

At the moment after the man called Colonel Darke entered, he had evidently been watching outside.

"Wolf, who is that girl?" he asked, in his deep tones.

He was a man whose age it was hard to tell; he might be thirty, and perhaps forty-five. He was a tall, gaunt, gaunt man, with a long, thin face, covered by a long black beard, and his eyes deep-set, dark blue, and yet full of fire, while they were ever restless, hardly resting an instant on any face or object.

His form denoted strength and activity, and he wore a brown corduroy suit, and kept his coat open, as though to quickly get his hands upon the revolvers upon his hips.

A black slouch hat shaded his forehead, and his pants were stuck in cavalry boots.

"That is the very question she asked about you, colonel," said the judge with a smile, while he seemed to know much regarding him; he fainted dead away when he saw my face. Who can he be?"

"Did you think her a ghost?"

"She is either a woman I once knew well, or her ghost!"

"No! that girl is the one I think it is, in *propr*

persona, though I would have sworn on the Bible she was dead."

"What did you think it was, colonel?"

"There is none of your business, sir; her presence started me because I believed her in her grave. What does she call herself here?"

"Violet Markham."

"Ah! what is she doing here?"

"That is her business, Colonel Darke," quietly answered the man.

"You refuse to tell, then?"

"Oh no, I really do not know more about her than she has told; she was robbed by that overland curse, Captain Satan and his gang, and the boys gave her a benefit, and a royal one-to-night, and never did I hear a voice like hers, and I heard Jenny Lind, years ago."

"She was in one of the stages that arrived from Denver to-day, then?"

"Yes; she came over in the extra, whose driver was killed, and passengers robbed, she among the number."

"Strange, very strange; her face really startled me," said the colonel, musingly.

"And you are only the third man she has started to-night."

"How mean you, Wolf! You know I just came in from the Deadman's Mine."

"Well, a young miner in the mountains, evidently one who has seen better days and is a gentleman, threw into the contribution basket as his mite, a jewel-studded miniature of Miss Markham herself, and then fled from the theater, there was of me,"

ges to Mr. Tarleton, and from that day have had Dead Shot, on account of the way he laid out six of Captain Satan's band this morning, gave a loud cry and fainted in the theater, when he caught sight of the young lady; now you run for your life when you see her, and I will tell all I can tell you, colonel, and doubtless more, too."

"Doubtless. Now, where is this young miner?"

"He bolted for the mountains, the boys say."

"And this Dead Shot?"

"He soon recovered from his swoon, and came to his room and stayed awhile and just before you came in lay down to the X. 10. U. S. gambling saloon, for he came to the door at the furthest end of the passageway."

"But I will have it cost what it may. She was pure when that was taken—pure as the snow falling upon the mountains, and now—"

"Fool, that I should tremble so! What is she to me now? Nothing! and yet I risk life to come here and take from her that likeness which I madly threw away."

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huge hairy arms of a monarch of the mountain—an immense grizzly bear.

Home to the hills went the keen blade—once, twice thrice with lightning and grape—until at last that the grizzly, *seem* beneath the feet of the struggling man and beast, and down, down fell the two until Hugh Lambert was lost in utter unconsciousness.

And the storm raged on for hours; the snow falling in masses; then the moon shone out clear and cold, lighting the dreary scene, but all trace of the short, fierce struggle was obliterated, and neither victor nor vanquished was visible.

CHAPTER VI.

THE TERRIBLE STAKE.

The X. 10. U. S. Saloon of Central City was certainly an institution in its way, and a spirited one to boot, for there was an extensive bar, behind which stood Red Turner, who could send the bullet of a pistol through the ingredients of a cocktail into a glass; then the gambling tables, where every game of chance known in the calendar of decked fortune, could be indulged in, and over all the scene of life and death was hourly, gaily played, with death coming at the winner over some unfortunate.

The bar and the gambling saloon were all in one large hall, and mightily was the place crowded with those who loved liquor for the excitement it would bring, and cards for the gold they might win or lose.

The frequenters of this saloon with the very remarkable cognomen, were many of them characters of the peculiar—men who gambled for love, for gold, or from the love of gambling, men who drank deep from the love of liquor, and others who were temperate from various causes—the principal one of which was that their tongues, untied by whisky, were wont to divulge strange secrets that had best

Others were there nightly, who squandered away the bright dust they dug by day, while many hoped to add to their laid up store a little more to hasten on the day of their return to their homes and their families.

Many bold and honest miners were steady workers, and visited the X. 10. U. S. merely *pour leur temps*, for the long evenings hung heavily upon their hands, or rather minds.

Men aged, then a large class of desperate adventurers, whom whose heads, were the truth known about them, hung rewards for crimes committed, and who had saved their lives by flight, and were cursing their souls by adding deadlier deeds to the list of the past.

Such was the gathering there the night upon which Judge Wolf, the proprietor of the Central City House, and Colonel Darke, the owner of Deadman's Mine, entered the saloon.

Colonel Darke, well known to all present—the judge, quiet, inoffensive man, avoiding trouble always, yet never shrinking the alternative if it were forced upon him; a man who kept a good house, pure liquors in his bar, and allowed no disturbances upon the premises; yet he was fond of cards, and fond of cards, who was the stakes what they might.

The colonel, a man known to no one in and around Central City, that any one had found out, who had owned the Deadman's Mine about two years, having won a game of cards, and staked his life against it, "chance."

It was said to be a paying "lead," but had received its name from the fact that several men who had owned it, had been found dead there, a pistol-shot in the head, yet no one could tell them why.

But the colonel took a fancy to it, a few days after he arrived in Central City, offered to buy it, and the proprietor refusing to sell, he offered to gamble for its possession, a proposition the owner, a California Spaniard, at once accepted.

Colonel Darke, having no value of the mine in money, Colonel Darke put his life against the balance and won the game, when the Californian at once attacked him, driven to frenzy by the loss of his valuable property, and the colonel, who had been shot through the heart, and had since been propped up in his position, though there were those who were wont to say that some day another body, killed by a pistol-shot, would be found in the claim; but those chances Colonel Darke was willing to take.

He said that he had been an officer of the army, who had committed a crime that sent him to the frontier as a fugitive; but this was only hearsay, and none really knew anything about him, other than that he was an elegant gentleman in manners, a successful gambler, a good host, and resolute and always "on the shoot," if occasion demanded, and Deadman's Mine was believed to be a splendid property, as the colonel had gotten very rich in the two years he had owned it.

He was not at the Central City House, the colonel lived in a slab-shanty at the mine, and dressed as a miner; in turn he was considerate of a dandy in his attire, wearing corduroy, velvet or broadcloth, as the humor struck him.

"Drink, colonel," the saloon, the judge said, quickly:

"Yes, thank you; brandy straight, Red."

Red Turner, named on account of his fiery-red hair and face, and his carnal deeds, bowed pleasanly, and approached the door to the bar.

"No, colonel; oh, there he comes now, if you mean the gent who wiped out the knights."

As Red Turner spoke Tarleton entered the saloon and approached the bar, and when he and changed his costume, all who had seen him in the hotel, on the arrival of the stage, at once knew him.

He now wore a suit of heavy blue material, the sack-coat seeing as an overcoat, and a black belt had his coat, and a gold chain encircling the waist.

His pants were studded in the form of tiny bayonets, upon the heels of which were the gold spurs, and, as if to protect him from the driving snow, a scarf of blue silk encircled his neck, the ends hanging jauntily from his belt.

Upon his hands were fine buck-skin gauntlets, which he drew off as he approached the bar, the act displaying a splendid diamond upon the little finger of his left hand, and he carried the riding-whip, with a gold handle, in his right hand.

If he was named he did not exhibit his weapons, but all felt he was not the man to come to such a place without being well "heeled."

A number of admiration were round the crowded room as he came in, and every eye was turned upon him, and every tongue was loosed to admit that he was a superb specimen of manhood.

Had it not been known what he could do, some reckless fellows present would doubtless at once have taken him by the collar, and his elegant appearance—but Dan Smith, tongue had been busy ever since the coach came in, and the town was alive with the exploits of the Gold Bullet Sport.

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tendance?" he exclaimed, clasping the doctor's hand in both of his.

"Yes," replied the doctor.

"And my poor friend—how have you found him?"

"A doomed man!"

"Ah! You shock me! It is not so bad—surely, it is not so bad!"

"He cannot live twenty-four hours. If he were a younger man or had led a different life, he might rally. But not he. His nervous force has been shattered. Now he will die for want of it."

"*Mon Dieu!*" I cannot tell *ze* pain you cause me! His child—ah! I think of her!"

"She is at his bedside. She is indeed to be pitied."

"And you have told her *zat* she will be an orphan so soon?"

"No, I dared not tell her. I thought it better to let the truth come to her by degrees, from her own observation."

"Ah! so kind of heart! You have my gratitude for your consideration for one whom I love as dearly as if she were already my own."

Dr. Meredith started, flushed, then turned pale. He had never thought of M. de Calignay as a possible lover of Miriam; but as he looked at him now he saw that the disparity was not greater than that often seen between man and wife.

The Frenchman was on the summer side of forty, and unquestionably a fine-looking man, physically. Why should not she love and wed him?

Dr. Meredith recalled the look and tone of M. de Calignay when the latter offered him the glass of water after Miriam's fainting-fit. What had they meant? Proprietaryship?

The thought brought blended emotions to the doctor's heart.

First a sense of relief that Fate had taken out of his hands a question that was rapidly becoming a haunting torture to him. But it was a desperate sort of satisfaction, such as a criminal might feel on receiving sentence after a protracted trial in which suspense had become worse than certain death. And with this feeling came a dreary sense of desolation and loss.

"You wish to see your friends?" he asked, for he felt creeping over him a strong sense of aversion to the Frenchman which rendered the physical proximity painful. He ascribed this jealousy and fear that it was unworthy; but it hindered him, and he knocked on the door and opened it, so that M. de Calignay could not well prolong the conversation.

When the Frenchman had entered the room, a new feeling took possession of the doctor. He seemed to have abandoned Miriam to one who would not work her true weal. So with conflicting emotions Dr. Meredith tortured himself.

Meanwhile, the Curate had welcomed M. de Calignay, his false friend, with a smile.

"Ah!" was his reflection, "this is the protector of my child. Fate sent him just as I asked the question. I will take it as a good omen. And he has been so kind to us both he cannot deserve her now."

"My good friend, do I find you again stricken down? Alas! my brother, what have you done? Had you no thought of your child—our child?—My note call her so, since I love her tenderly?"

"I deserve your reproach, Calignay; and yet you are too kind to make it bitter," said the Curate. "Yes, I have been cruel to her—"

Father, I cannot bear to hear you talk thus like this," sobbed Miriam.

"I see it more clearly now, my child, and I cannot help reproaching myself. Hoping to gain all, I have denied you much that I should have given you. Now that all is lost, I have the bitterness of leaving you desolate and destitute."

"Not while I live, my good friend!" protested M. de Calignay, putting an arm protectively about Miriam. "When you are gone she becomes my care."

The girl rewarded him with a look of deep gratitude.

"Spoken like my generous friend!" cried the Curate, his eyes becoming humid. "Ah! Calignay, how can I repay you all I owe you? But you will believe that I meant to pay you every cent!"

"Can you speak of that at such a time?" cried M. de Calignay, apparently much hurt. "Ah! my friend, how little you have known me. Had I not loved you as I do, I would have done it all and more for Miriam's sake. But let us past go. We must look to the future."

"That is what pains me—to leave a young girl all unprotected to the world."

"Father! Father! Father!"

At the sound of a burst of grief Miriam clutched her parent's hands, throwing herself on her knees at the bedside.

All the barriers of self-control were down, swept away by the mighty flood of an uncontrollable grief. The girl shivered with dread, and sobbed and moaned in a way that would have moved the sternest heart.

Dr. Meredith knocked on the door and entered the room.

"Come!" he said, taking her gently by the wrist. "You must go and calm yourself. You shall return as soon as you have regained self-control."

"No! no! no!" she cried, wildly. "He will die while I am away! Oh! father! father! father!"

With gentle force Dr. Meredith and M. de Calignay unclasped her fingers and bore her almost fainting from the room.

While Dr. Meredith set himself to soothe her, M. de Calignay returned to the Curate.

"Calignay," continued the gambler, picking up the thread of conversation where he had left off, "I cannot lose sight of the temptations that wait for you, young girl who is cursed with poverty. With all your kindness you cannot protect her as a father would. I have done so much now by seducing her from the outside world. And now if she were really married to one who would throw around her the protection of a home, I should die easier."

"Give her to me!" cried M. de Calignay, extending his arms impulsively.

"To you!" exclaimed the Curate in surprise.

"Ah! my friend!" cried the Frenchman, seeming to be suddenly overwhelmed by a flood of emotion, "if you only knew how I have loved her—how I do love her! You have often expressed gratitude for little services I have rendered you from time to time. Shall I be frank?—it was because you were her father. When I came ostensibly to see you, I could feast my eyes on her loveliness and grace, and listen to the sound of her voice. My good friend, you know me—you know what I have to offer her. Not opulence, grandeur, ostentation; but a home at least will have every comfort, and enough of the luxuries of life to make her envied by many. And she will be as apple of my eye! Ah! my friend, give her to me! As her husband I can hedge her round about; but only as her father's friend—*ah!* you know *ze* world!—my most tender care of her would be turned to poison!"

"There were others in the Curate's eyes."

"Calignay," he said, "I have not words to express my feelings. If I could see her your wife, I should know that her friend was assured. But are you sure that you love her so—that it is not pity for her desolate condition?"

"My friend," interrupted the Frenchman, "her smile—*ze* touch of her hand is heaven to me! I have longed to speak to you of this, but I feared that your hopes for her future would lead you to reject my suit. Now *zat* all is abandoned, and I can offer her a brighter future than she can hope for without me, I am bold to say—give her to me!"

"Alas! her future is blighted! With means at my command I might have wrested for her the fortune that is hers of right; but after my death the case is hopeless. She has no prospects save those your disinterested offer opens to her, and I wish it were carried into effect already."

"While I believe *zat* I am not repugnant to her, I cannot hope to fill her romantic ideal, which shall have ten or a dozen years as advantage of me," said the Frenchman. "For zis

reason

she cannot have looked upon me as a lover. But she has confidence in your love and will yield to your judgment as to what is for her real well-being. If you put it as your dying wish to see us united, she cannot refuse; and she will have my care before your hold upon her relaxes."

"Calignay, it shall be so. Bring her to me. I will secure her consent, and the marriage can take place before I die."

"It will be very abrupt. Let her be surrounded by her friends. As yet Mlle. Leoline knows nothing of your misfortune. I will fetch her. It will make it easier for *ze* dear child. Ah! my brother, sad as I am over *ze* irreparable loss which I feel is impending, zero is music in my soul! Am I selfish? Do I love you less?"

"No! no! Calignay. I would not have it otherwise. I am glad that my child brings you happiness. In return you will give her peace and security."

"A tear fell from the Frenchman's eyes upon the Curate's hand as he pressed it to his lips. Alas! poor Miriam!

(To be continued—commenced in No. 469.)

LET IT PASS.

Not swift to take offense;

Let it pass!

Brood not over o'er a wrong;

Which will disappear ere long;

Rather sing this cheery song;

Let it pass!

Strife corrodes the purest mind;

Let it pass!

As the unregarded wind,

Let it pass!

And vulgar souls that live

May condemn without reprove;

Tis the noble who forgive;

Let it pass!

Echo not an angry word;

Let it pass!

Think how often you have erred;

Let it pass!

Since our joys must pass away

Like the dewdrops on the spray;

Wherefore should our sorrows stay!

Let it pass!

It is good you're taking ill,

Let it pass!

Oh! be kind and gentle still;

Let it pass!

Time at last makes all things straight;

Let us not resent, but wait;

And our triumph shall be great;

Let it pass!

Bid your anger to depart,

Let it pass!

Lay these homely words to heart,

Let it pass!"

Follow not the giddy throng;

Better to be wronged than wrong;

Therefore, for this *querida* song—

Let it pass!

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Sunshine Papers.

The Other Side of the Question.

"WE want to hear the other side of the question!" say several gentlemen who have read the answers to the feminine inquiries: "How shall we get a beau?" and "How shall we keep him?" as interestingly as if they were of another sex. "Surely you have some advice for us!"

Indeed I have, gentle sirs! Do you suppose I could listen to you discussing matrimony and its fair candidates with all the philosophy, fastidiousness and satire common to men who have never found themselves at Cupid's mercy, and picking your lady acquaintances in pieces with an uncharitableness that would have done credit to the reputation of women, without a desire to give you a piece of my mind upon the subject?

When did you discuss matrimony and young ladies? And what did you say? you demand.

Such questions are just like a man! Of course you have quite forgotten all the complimentary sentences you passed upon this feminine acquaintance and that! But do not let that worry you! My memory is not quite so conveniently short, and it does not trouble me in the least, to recall to your mind that you said Miss A. did not know much, Miss B. was forward, Miss C. was awkward, Miss D. too awfully homely! And, possibly, you begin to recollect, now, that you condemned Miss Elsie as a flirt; frowned at the mention of Miss Fanny's name because she is independent; raised at Miss Gertrude for being on the look-out for a husband; abhorred Miss Helen for liking gentlemen's society; despised Miss Ida as you had heard she worked for a living; did not approve of Miss Julia who lacked intellectuality; and so through the entire alphabetical list of your female marriageable friends found objects worthy only of your satire, disdain or denunciation.

And who are you, pray let me ask, that you should be so hypocritical regarding the ladies who enjoy the extreme felicity of an acquaintance with you? Are you thoroughly educated, retiring, graceful and handsome? Do you never flirt? Are you not independent? Have you not thought about getting a wife? Do you care nothing for ladies' society? Are you not working for a living? Is your intellect a particularly brilliant one? And if you are not the paragon that you desire the lady to be concerning whom alone you can entertain any ideas of matrimony, by what right do you demand such perfections in her?

That is one thing that I have to say upon the "other side of the question," to the young men who are looking about them for wives, that no man has a right to claim of the woman he asks to marry him, what he cannot give—what he will not give!

And I assure you, my dear sirs, I believe the average young woman of to-day is quite good enough for the average young man. You think you can commit all manner of small sins, and indulge in all manner of pleasant vices with impunity, and still deserve only the love of a refined, intelligent, lovely, gentle girl; and, indeed, that such ought to feel honored by your preference, and quite jump at the chance to throw herself at your feet.

But, you are mistaken! It is the old nonsense that "What's folly in a man is guilt in woman!" that underlies this careless regard in which men hold the majority of young ladies, deeming that, however imperfect their own lives, the lives of the women they marry must coincide with a certain sentimental masculine idea of irreproachability. What's folly in a man is folly in a woman—nothing more. What's guilt in a woman is of equal guilt in a

man. There is no sex in sin, or folly or deceit.

Physically, mentally, and morally, men and women are equals before God. And in choosing a wife a man has no right to demand any good beyond what he himself can bestow, though as a suppliant he may sue for the love of any woman who encourages him to such a test of fate. If he is well educated he is quite right in saying that the ignorant will do for his wife; but he must not condemn her as ignorant until he has real *proofs* of it, nor must he prove it upon the basis that she knows nothing of that in which his education almost entirely consists; since, if he has studied medicine, while she will be quite likely to know very little upon that subject, she may be much his superior in some other branch of learning or usefulness. If he has always been quiet and careful of speech, modest of manner, and retiring in disposition, he has the moral right to say, that "Miss B." who is "forward" is not a proper woman to become his wife. Not that there is much danger of Miss B. suffering from a shower of missiles projected by her masculine acquaintances who "dare cast the first stone." If he is a model of grace it is quite natural, if rather hard, that he should condemn the next candidate for her awkwardness. While, if he is handsome, he may be excused for desiring to overlook "Miss D." who is awfully homely. If he has never flirted it is thoroughly consistent for him to refuse to marry a girl who has been thus guilty. If he is weak, vacillating, self-distrustful, cowardly, it can scarcely be supposed that he would care to marry "independent Miss Fanny." If he, verdant and innocent, unmeaning, unsuspecting, finds himself hopelessly in love, let us hope it is not with reprehensible "Miss Gertrude," who has been "on the look-out for a husband." If he lives on his father's money, his contempt for a young lady so immensely his superior as to earn her own living can be justly appreciated! If he has a brilliant intellect, he would indeed be a foolish young man to unite himself for life to a woman incapable of appreciating it. If he cares nothing for ladies' society, it would be eminently fitting for him to find and marry a woman who cares nothing for gentlemen's society. What a happy couple they would be!

Indeed, I really should sorrow for the many young men anxiously seeking wives without ever having seen a lady quite good enough to fill that honorable position, did not I know that when once the little blind god directs his shafts their way they will become hopelessly forgetful of all their fine ideals. A man thoroughly in love is an utterly irresponsible creature; and though he is not apt to remain long at that delightful state it is generally long enough to commit some folly—usually the marrying of a young lady the exact opposite of any his friends would have selected for him, and the exact opposite of that phenomenally perfect woman he had always avered he could alone make Mrs. —!

PARSON'S DAUGHTER.

NEVER SAY DIE.

OVER and over again, day after day, year in and year out, do we have to listen to the same complaint: "I am thoroughly disheartened and discouraged and I might just as well give up at once for I meet with nothing but failures; and the more I strive the less do I succeed."

Now, that is all wrong in two ways: first, the remark is scarcely ever a true one—too much exaggeration in it; secondly, it is far from right to let discouragements have a bad effect on us or make us use such an expression as the foregoing one.

Now, one might not just as well give up at once without making further efforts. Did you ever stop to think, you, who get discouraged so easily, of the hardships, trials and discouragements the early settlers in this land, we now inhabit, met with? Scarcey had they procured a humble little home of their own when the Indians raided on it and left it but blackened ruins; but these settlers were workers, not whiners, and labored to build and plant again. And the wives of the settlers, did they not have enough to endure, to test their courage, to fill them with fear? History will tell you that woman—though you may think it an unwomanly trait—fought as hard in defense of their homes as ever man did.

Did you never hear of the young woman who rushed by a party of Indians with her apron full of powder to give to the men at the fort when the town of Wheeling was attacked? When reminded that a man would have the advantage over her in strength and swiftness, she answered: "The loss of a woman will be less felt." It seems to me the loss of such a woman must have been felt in those days of trouble. There were brave and heroic women in the old times; they were never "thoroughly disheartened and discouraged."

Ah, those early settlers and pioneers could teach us many a lesson in perseverance, courage and hope. "Never give up" seemed to be a motto they carried into practice in their daily lives, and were they not better and stronger-hearted for so doing? In captivity they were not always looking forward to escape or rescue? This very hope kept them from feeling their sorrows too keenly; it cheered them in their dark hours, and, by looking above for Divine help, showed that they had faith and acted up to it.

Precious little good it would have done them to have given up in despair and "grovled" away the time. Courage kept the hearts and spirits up, and they were always looking forward to the bright and sunny side of life for them again.

And what are some of our trials, at the worst, when we compare them with those of others? Did you ever think of the thousands who are compelled to toil day after day, in summer's heat and winter's cold, for a mere pittance, scarcely earning enough to keep soul and body together and yet who struggle bravely on and do not sit down by the wayside complaining at what they cannot help?

You say you wouldn't work for that pittance? Suppose you were obliged to? "Even then you wouldn't?" What nonsense! Better that than starve. "You'd starve first." I'm afraid you'd have to, if you won't work. Starving is not so pleasant a sensation as you may imagine. Better work than starve. It may seem very romantic to starve; you may think it sounds quite heroic for you to say you prefer starvation to working for a small salary; but my ears it sounds foolish and wicked. It is work that ennobles one, not idleness.

And matters might be worse—yes, ten times worse—with some of us; and, even were they so to be, they would give us no excuse for finding fault with our situation, or for wasting our time in useless repining or moaning at what cannot be helped. Instead of endeavoring to make our condition worse, let us strive to make it better and we can do so by sticking to the plucky, honorable, noble motto—"Never Say Die."

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What author admires? *Warne*.

What author may be said to ever be in a floury state? *In-graham*.

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THE SONG OF DEATH.

BY W. W. LONG.

Leaves have their time to fall,
And flowers to wither in the North wind's breath;
And stars to set; but all,
Thou hast all seasons for thine own, oh, Death!

—HEMANS.

I am the Reaper King of earth!
They crowned me long ago!
When the world was new and young,
With its first sad wail of woe.
I stand at the bridal bed;
And at the marriage bed;
I march o'er the earth in power and might—
Who will resist my tread?

Where the soldier his watch is keeping,
In the lone hours of the night,
And the stars are bright.
I have silenced both in my might.
I have stood in the halls of pleasure,
When the festive bowl went round,
But e'en the morning star came forth,
Their mirth in woe was crowned.

Man hath shaken the earth with power,
And won a wreath of fame,
But I laid my hand upon his brow,
And now where is his name?
Love sat beneath the vine-clad bower,
With Beauty as I passed;
I smiled upon them in my might,
And they sank to earth's chill breast.

I have heard the wild winds blowing,
Thro' the fields and woods away—
I have seen earth's children weeping,
And the world's woe far away.
Where in my birth I came from,
No one on earth can say—
Where my feet the earth doth press,
Mortals shudder—turn away.

How They Went Home.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

MARIAN FIELD stopped a moment at Burnham and Burnham's window and her lovely blue eyes looked all the admiration she felt at sight of the tempting display of velvets and silks, laces and ribbons, satins and all the hundred and one accessories of a lady's toilet. All the admiration, and a little—just a little purely feminine envy, and then she turned her face away, to the quiet, plain, elderly lady who had stopped a moment, waiting for her.

"Oh, Annie, how exquisite everything is! I wonder if it is awfully wicked in me to wish we were rich, and to hate Meredith Alwyn because we are not? Let's hurry away, before I become perfectly savage."

Her sweet, girlish laugh rippled out on the quiet evening air—a laugh that had just a tinge of bitterness mixed with its silver sweetness, and a gentleman who was accidentally passing at the moment, looked to see Marian's lovely face, with her blue eyes, and fair complexion, to which the crisp December air had lent a delicate pink tinge, and bright golden hair that was lightly fluffy over her forehead, and looking coquettishly becoming as it escaped from the pale blue zephyr hood she wore. It was in the moment passing glance he had, but enough to show him the surpassing loveliness of Marian and the quiet well-bredness of both Marian and her sister.

And then as they passed further away into the dusk of the night, he went into a quiet little drug store, next Burnham and Burnham's brilliantly illuminated show-windows—interested into inquiring of the pleasant-faced lad, who, standing at the door had heard and seen the ladies.

The lad went briskly around to his post behind the counter at his customer's entrance.

"I want some postage-stamps and cigars, my boy—I believe that was what I wanted, at least, until the sight of that lovely girl that just now passed drove it from my head. Who were they, do you know? I'll take a half dozen of those Reina Victorias—yes."

The drug clerk promptly selected the choicest cigars, talking pleasantly the while.

"You must mean Miss Field and Miss Marian; they just went by. Miss Marian is called the prettiest girl hereabouts. I think so."

The gentleman smiled at the young fellow's enthusiasm.

"I quite agree with you; I think I never saw a more perfect face. Field—I think I've heard the name before. How great is the extent of my bill?"

"A dollar, at least. And there's such a romance connected with them," the clerk went on, dealing out the change for the five, his godsend of a customer had laid on the show-case.

"A romance? Indeed! Ah, yes, thank you, I will take a light. But the romance?"

"Why, to-day they are as poor as—oh, so poor they have to earn their own living, while six months ago they were the heiresses to the Deaconwoode estate—perhaps you know where that is? Unless you are a stranger."

"I certainly am a total stranger, but I have heard of the great Deaconwoode estate; it's worth a million dollars, more or less, I've been told. And those ladies were the heiresses?"

"Yes, sir—from the time when they were born and brought up on the place—and not until all of a sudden, was it discovered that there was somebody who had a better claim on it than they—first nephew to old Mr. Field, and these young ladies were second nieces—and so, the lawyers made a row about it, and Miss Field and Miss Marian walked out as patient and proud and smiling as ever, and took up their quarters down-town, and earn their little salary that wouldn't buy the toilet-water they used to order here, of a year."

"Quite a remarkable experience for two young ladies, and you have told it well. It really is a pity—yes, there are, one, two, four—all right. A fine night!" And Mr. Meredith Alwyn nodded to his diffuse young friend, and took himself slowly, thoughtfully up the street, that led directly to the magnificent estate of Deaconwoode.

"Beggars—those splendid women—that lovely-voiced, sapphire-eyed girl, fit to sit on the grandest throne under heaven! Beggars—through my acceptance of uncle Cyril Field's legacy! Why didn't somebody tell me the atrocity of such wholesale rascality? Is it fate, I wonder, that threw them directly in my path, almost the hour of my arrival in this strange place whither I had come to see my new acquaintances? And how shall I see them again?"

"Will we do it? Why Annie, of course we will do it! It would be a direct flying in the face of Providence to refuse such a godsend. It won't be any trouble for dear old Elsie to cook for one more, and that big empty room that looks out on the chimneys of Deaconwoode—we will never use that room, Annie. And only think—twelve dollars a week! It will tide us through the winter so comfortably."

Man Field's eyes were shining like blue stars as she talked eagerly and rapidly to her staid elderly sister, sitting by the sunny east window, tying the ends of the threads of the silk handkerchief, she had finished hemming—an immense pile, shimmering like fragments of rainbows against her dark dress.

"But—dear—the idea of our having—a boarder—and—a gentleman boarder at that! If it was a lady, now—"

Marian laughed.

"You dear, proud old darling! Why shouldn't we have a gentleman boarder as well as anybody else—and just the handsomest man you ever saw, Annie! And, *entre nous*, *ma sœur*, if it was a lady who had applied to us, I wouldn't think of it—such fussing, criticising creatures as we are. But, give a man plenty of good things to eat, and if he pays twelve dollars he is entitled to the very best of the market, and Elsie's specimens of Deaconwoode cooking, and a cosy, warm, well-lighted place to enjoy his slippers and cigars, and it is all he wants to make him a happy animal."

Miss Field smiled, amused in spite of herself, yet there was a reluctant look in her eyes as she looked in Marian's bright, hopeful face.

"You must do as you think best, dear. I dare say it will be all right."

And so it came to pass that Mr. Meredith Alwyn took possession of the room in the Field sisters' cottage that looked out on the chimneys and turrets and towers of Deaconwoode—took possession as their twelve dollar a week boarder, and gave his name as Curtis, and in course of time very naturally came to be on the most excellent terms with them, until one day, Miss Field, in a particularly confidential mood, told him all about the romance of their lives; how, until so lately, they had lived their life of elegance and ease at Deaconwoode, and how the prospect of their future had faded as completely and suddenly as a beautiful dream.

"Whoever this usurping heir is, he must be a double-dyed rascal—selfish to the heart's core—to have defrauded you so."

Mr. Curtis seemed remarkably emphatic in his denunciations.

"Oh, I would not like to think that," Miss Field said, in her gentle, womanly way, "because he certainly had a right to it, and I dare say he was delighted at his good fortune, and surely he ought to enjoy it."

"I don't know about that, Miss Field. I think it simply inhuman for any man to turn two delicately bred women out of their home of elegance and ease, as this villain has turned you out. Perhaps he did not know, but he should have been told, and he certainly should at least have been divided."

Miss Field smiled.

"But people don't often be so generous, Mr. Curtis, for Marian's sake it would be pleasant; but I don't know. The discipline of adversity and the necessity for effort are making a grand woman of her, while I must confess I rather shrink in distaste."

An hour or so later he and Marian went out for a little stroll—they had fallen into that habit lately.

"You look a little worn out, Guy. Is business brisk?"

"Well, yes; just now our court calendar is pretty well crowded."

"Here are the ladies!"

The door opened and Laura Arnsdale and Miss Evelyn, her governess, came in.

Miss Evelyn turned around from the window. His glance fell upon the governess. He saw a plain dress, but a wonderfully beautiful girl, and he made way for her as for a princess. There was an impulse, not of admiration simply, but of respect in our first sight of a beautiful woman; because we intuitively reverence

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"Thanks, uncle; there's nothing gives me more pleasure than to throw aside my law-briefs and take a trip to quiet little Albemarle."

Laura had wandered some distance ahead, paying no attention whatever to those behind them. "You haven't said yet that you were glad to see me, Laura," said Guy.

"But you know I am glad, Guy," said Guy. "It is a very well for you to say so, if you didn't laugh when you say it."

"Was I laughing?" and the pretty girl leaned lightly on his arm. "I wasn't conscious of it."

"It's very odd what pleasure you take—I don't mean you, in particular, but all of you—in bewildering and mocking us men. I never know when you're in earnest. You're so awfully insincere, and take such delight in it."

"If one's known to be insincere, one's incapable of deceiving any more, and nobody has any right to complain, don't you see?" urged Laura, ingeniously.

Guy laughed, and acknowledged himself beaten.

Mr. Arnsdale and Miss Evelyn now joined them again, and then the party of four broke up.

Miss Isabelle Evelyn, going to her room and locking the door, sat down before her glass, thinking and looking all the time at her reflected features. She liked looking at herself in the glass. She knew that she was beautiful; and that her beauty was her power.

She took a letter from her pocket which she had that evening received. It was open; she was not now about to read it for the first time. Moving her bedroom candle near, she read it over again in an anxious way and her cheeks grew a shade pink than usual.

Twice she read it, and a strange, wild look stole over her features. Then she thought profoundly, then for the third time read the letter through, and turned round the back of the envelope, and looked at that, and so at last held it up to the light and burned it to ashes.

She sat on the side of her bed for a long time and fell into a deep rumination, and did not collect herself until the chill recalled her.

With a little shudder up she stood, shook her beautiful dark tresses round her shoulders, and gathered them into a few great cords and extinguishing the light, lay down to await the coming of quiet sleep. But her head was full of thoughts which kept running in her mind and would not permit her to close her eyes. It was the words, "Drowned, and sent out with the tide."

CHAPTER IV.

A BAD DREAM.

A WEEK elapsed and Guy Fenston still remained at Albermarle Villa. When he left his office in New York he had promised to come back in a few days, but now his only thoughts were of Isabelle Evelyn. Her presence to him was sunshine, and her absence gloom.

He, however, took great pains not to let his uncle discover the state of his feelings toward the governess by the slightest look or word. Because he had two reasons for keeping his passion concealed. In the first place he was not certain that Miss Evelyn entertained any other feeling for him than respect; and in the second place he knew that his uncle had always destined that he should some day become the husband of Isabelle Evelyn.

One evening Guy Fenston and Miss Evelyn were standing alone in the drawing-room, near one of the windows, conversing in a low tone. Mr. Arnsdale—whom they thought to be more than a mile away—entered unperceived.

He beheld them with a shock. Guy was holding Isabelle Evelyn's hand in his, and she was looking down, her cheeks dyed with a brilliant blush.

But a moment passed before they saw him, and Miss Evelyn glided through the window that opened upon the veranda in front.

Archibald Arnsdale stood stock-still in the doorway, a terrible expression upon his face.

Guy eyed him with strange stare, but was quite himself before his uncle had half-recovered.

"I thought I heard your voice, uncle, and I wasn't wrong—just the moment coming up the path," said he, gayly. "Miss Evelyn came in to inquire for you. She wanted to know something about your letters—some instructions. She's your secretary, isn't she?"

"My letters—yes, she writes them sometimes. You both thought, of course, that I was still away," said Mr. Arnsdale, fixing his eyes upon his nephew and speaking in a measured way.

"I really had not been making conjectures on the subject," Guy replied, with a smile.

Mr. Arnsdale said nothing more; he was aware that he had said something very foolish. He turned round and went into the library, at the opposite side of the hall.

On the middle of the floor of this room he stood for some time with downcast eyes and darkened face, not exactly thinking, but rather stunned, and with the elements of fury indistinctly rolling in his breast.

He walked to the window and looked out, without an object. A pleasant female laugh came to his ear, and he saw Miss Isabelle Evelyn talking with Laura on the lawn a little distance away.

"I'm cool!" he mutter'd, throwing himself into a chair. "that girl is deceitful; she has only been amusing herself at my expense."

As we have said, Mr. Arnsdale was a proud, vindictive man, and this little scene in the drawing-room had stung his pride to the quick. In truth, he regarded Isabelle Evelyn as his future wife, and, perhaps, he had a right to believe that she *really* loved him. He was now undergoing the agonies of jealousy. Moreover he felt mortified to think that, perhaps, his nephew had discovered his secret.

While in this mood Archibald Arnsdale's eyes happened to fall upon the portrait of his dead wife which hung on the wall directly before him.

For a moment he looked at it blankly, and then he shuddered, for he imagined there was a look of reproof in that sad, sweet face gazing at him steadily as if it would start from the canvas.

Nineteen years ago—he remembered it very well—he had married Agnes Cresswick, a pretty, fragile girl. She had loved him devotedly. But his love?—where was it now when she had been dead not quite a year? It had long burnt out, cold ashes, years ago—gone before their first child was born.

"Agnes had kept him down in life," he said. "She had always been a dead weight on him. If she had but been a different woman," he thought, "she might have won a higher place in the world. And there was Laura, a perfect copy of her mother—a pretty face, but nothing else, no mental force!"

Long he sat in his library alone and pondered moodily. Until, after having finished a bottle of wine and smoked several cigars, he fell asleep with his head resting upon the back of the chair.

Sleeping in this uncomfortable attitude, with his head full of the fumes of liquor and tobacco, it was scarcely strange if Archibald Arnsdale dreamt a bad dream.

He thought that he was standing near a large tree overhanging the ravine at the back of the house. All was dark and gloomy, and a stillness like the stillness of death reigned over the whole scene. Not a breath of wind moved the leafy branches of the trees, and the waters of the brook seemed stagnant.

He tried to move away from the place, but was unable to stir hand or foot. Some spell that he could not shake off held him fast.

Presently a faint glimmer of the moon pierced athwart the universal gloom, and in the faint, uncertain light a shadowy figure came creeping to the opposite edge of the chasm.

It was too faint to be Evelyn.

The shadow looked across at him, and then lifting a white, transparent hand, with a triumphant smile, pointed to the bottom of the deep hollow where the filthy water lay.

He looked down. At first he saw nothing until the moon shone out fuller, and then there glimmered, cold and white beside the stream, a tombstone with this inscription:

"IN MEMORY OF ARCHIBALD ARNSDALE, AGED 49."

He awoke suddenly with a cry, and just then a sharp, light knock sounded on the library door. He was bewildered for a moment, then said, "Come in."

And in obedience to his invitation, the handle was turned, and the door gently opened.

"Good God! is it you?" said Mr. Arnsdale, in a wild whisper.

Isabelle Evelyn stood before him.

(To be continued.)

WITH CLEAVER VISION.

BY CAROLINA BERRY.

I saw to-night the man I loved
Three little years ago.
I did not think so short a time
Could change a mortal so!

There were none like him in those days,
So strong, so true, so wise;
He had a lofty, marble brow,
And tender, soulful eyes.

A voice of music; hair by which
The raven's wing would seem
But pale indeed; a face and form
To haunt the sculptor's dream.

But when I looked at him to-night,
I saw no single trace
Of the old glory; only just
A very common man.

Not a noble birth, no scat-tif orbs,
The face was round and sleek;
That once to my love-haunted eyes
Was so intensely Greek.

I know full well he has not changed
So very much. Ah, me!
But I was blind to those dear days.
And now, alas! I see.

'Tis very dreadful to be blind,
Of course, and yet to-night
I should be happier, far, if I
Had not received my sight.

One little thought will trouble me—
I only wish I knew
Whether he is blind, or if
His eyes are open, too.

The Fresh of Frisco;

OR,

The Heiress of Buenaventura.

A Story of Southern California.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN,

AUTHOR OF "THE WOLF-DEMON," "INJUN DICK," "THE POLICE SPY," "THE WITCHES OF NEW YORK," "THE CHILD OF THE SAVANNA," "PRETTY MISS NELL," "THE MAN FROM TEXAS," "ACE OF SPADES" "OWLS OF NEW YORK," ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A BATTLE ROYAL.

So suddenly did the sport arise from his place of concealment that for a moment the astonished men gazed upon him with wonder-stricken eyes, just as he had been an airy spirit from another world, rather than the mortal of solid flesh and blood which he was.

Blake was dressed exactly the same as he had been when he had first made his appearance in the mining camp, no sign of arms or traces of hostility, but he rose as quietly and faced the well-armed band, who were evidently on blood and slaughter bent, as calmly as though there were no bad blood between himself and the desperate men of Tejon Camp.

No sign of arms the sport displayed, we say; and for a moment the members of the invading band noted this fact at the first glance, but Blake was no stranger to them now, and they all understood that the man of ice and iron never was more dangerous than when he smiled and appeared harmless.

"Halt!" he cried, as he rose in view.

And the promptitude with which the advancing band stopped, rooted as it were in their places, when the command reached their ears, was something wonderful.

"How are ye, alcalde?" Blake continued. "I feel quite delighted at seeing you so near my home."

"I really had not been making conjectures on the subject," Guy replied, with a smile.

Mr. Arnsdale said nothing more; he was aware that he had said something very foolish.

He turned round and went into the library, at the opposite side of the hall.

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at all times to risk it, and would at once have fought unto the death any rash man who dared to say to the contrary; but in this wild spot, this bit of unknown ground, confronted by a man whose equal for cool hardihood had never yet stepped foot in the Mohave valley, these men of bloody, reckless lives felt the warm courage oozing out at their finger-ends, and the cold taint of fear beginning to sap their stout hearts.

"That is a question that you had better ask the alcalde, and prepare at once to answer it!"

Blake asked, with that arrogant coolness which in him was so exasperating.

"Why?" the alcalde fairly shouted. "Why? Don't you understand, my bold buck, that we have come after you and the boy whose quarrel you have so rashly taken upon your shoulders, and now that we have run you to the wall, that you can do is to surrender at once or else, inside of five minutes, shall we be the bold sport the alcalde will be?"

Blake laughed contempt.

"You pig-headed fool!" he exclaimed; "do you suppose that if I was helpless and without bucking, I would have allowed you to track me so easily? Oh, no! It was my game to lead you on, to lure you into a trap, from whence with life you will never escape. You are completely surrounded by my men, not one of your force but is covered by trusty weapons in the hands of sharp-shooters whose superiors ain't to be found on all this hyer Pacific slope. I just rose out of my ambush to give you fair warning—to save the shedding of blood, if you are at all inclined to listen to reason. I've no quarrel with all of you men, but this gentleman, the alcalde, is my mutual; and now I've got him just where I want him. The rest of you can't."

For answer the alcalde deliberately raised his rifle and pulled back the hammer.

"Is it war?" Blake cried; "look out for yourself, then!"

The alcalde pulled the trigger, but at the very moment that the piece was discharged, Blake dodged down behind the rock which had previously sheltered him and the bullet whistled harmlessly over his head.

Sharply rung the crack of the alcalde's rifle on the still mountain air, and a dozen echoes, each one as strong as the original report, repeated the sound.

No empty, harmless echoes, these phantoms—"I saw," either for the leaden bullets came whistling from the stubby clumps of pines and from the cover of the bowlders, behind which the secret foe was ambushed.

No foolish boast had the Fresh of Frisco made when he had declared that he had the invaders in a trap.

The effect of the volley was terrible—six of the alcalde's men were down, either slain outright or badly hurt.

And the deadly fire continued, too, dropping, irregular shots, the fire of the skirmish line, for the ambushed men were so near to the entrapped alcalde and his force that they were using their six-shooters now.

No matter how brave the men were, individually—it was not in human nature to stand and fight battle against such overwhelming advantages.

A few wild, random shots the alcalde's men fired and then they broke and fled! "Each man for himself and the devil take the hindmost," was their motto.

Even the alcalde followed in the flight, carried away by the sudden rush, and then from their coverts rose Blake and his band, and followed in pursuit.

Fast raced the fugitives over the rude and broken ground, and fast the pursuers followed.

Blake and McAlpine, and McAlpine and Arnsdale, for

knew his life was at stake—he had been taught something in swordsmanship.

"Aid me, or he will kill me!" suddenly cried Colonel Guarena, losing all nerve, and as he spoke there was heard the sound of hoof-strokes.

The Monte Prince turned quickly in the direction of the sound, but a cry from Colonel Guarena caused him to spring to his side. Merle had run him through the body to his side.

"Sainted Maria! he has killed me!" groaned the wounded man, as the Monte Prince lowered him to the ground.

With the stain from his rapier, Merle faced the Monte Prince:

"Señor, I am at your service now."

As he spoke, a score of *Lanceros* dashed up to the spot, driving rein in a circle round the dismounted prince.

"Seize that murderer, Señor Juárez!" yelled the Monte Prince, in tones of thunder.

A score of lances pointed at the breast of Merle—resistance was vain, and without a word he surrendered as a prisoner.

Had he known what was to follow, he would have died then and there, with his good rapier in hand, rather than lay down his arms and expect mercy from his captors.

CHAPTER XLV.

BLOOD MONEY.

It was with no little surprise depicted upon his face that Major Real Juárez—for the young man had been promoted to the rank formerly held by Vistal Guarena—gazed upon the scene before him in the gathering twilight.

"Your tardiness, Major Juárez, has caused this. Now, make all amends in your power," sternly commanded the Monte Prince.

My delay was unavoidable," said Don Felipe.

Señor, I have demanded my presence as I was sent to the castle, important dispatches had arrived from the Capital—is the Governor severely wounded?" and he bent over Vistal Guarena, who was breathing heavily.

Desperately so, I fear. I have stanched the bleeding as well as my power, and I wish you to have him borne with all honor to the castle. I will look after this prisoner," and the Monte Prince turned toward Merle.

"Señor, for the present you are a prisoner, and must submit to be ironed."

Major Juárez stepped forward, and his wrists were at once encircled by the chancery.

"Now, señor, we will mount and ride on; please take this horse," and the steed of Colonel Guarena was led up. Merle quickly mounted, with the aid of the Monte Prince, who then sprang into his saddle, and followed by a dozen *Lanceros* rode away.

Behind them followed Major Juárez with the wounded Governor, borne upon the lances of the soldiers.

When Merle found himself in the saddle, his first impulse was to dash away, and ride, ironed as he was, into Vero Cruz.

But a second thought convinced him that as a stranger he would have no influence there to counteract the power of the Castle's Governor and that of the Monte Prince, who he now knew was all powerful.

He was advised to the United States Consul at Vero Cruz it would have to be in his proper person of Merle Grenville, and under that name he was already outlawed by his Government, and a price set upon his head.

By his side rode the Monte Prince, a smile upon his face, and behind came the *Lanceros*, their lances at the ready.

In a short while they drew rein upon the beach where a small boat awaited; it was the intention of the wary gambler to enter the castle by the sea entrance.

Entering the boat, in which sat two oarsmen in the castle uniform, the Monte Prince and his prisoner were rowed rapidly away, the *Lanceros* returning to join their comrades who carried the wounded Governor.

A short row and the boat touched at the castle stairs; the party disembarked, and were met by a file of soldiers who marched them through a gateway near the bastions.

"Captain of the guard, lead this prisoner to one of the deep sea ports, and upon your life, see to it that he escapes not," said the Monte Prince, whose word was law even in that grim old castle.

The young officer addressed saluted politely, and replied:

"Upon your life it is, señor. In the water dungeon you say?"

"Yes, to one of those beneath the sea?"

"And iron him, señor?"

"Assuredly," and the Monte Prince walked away, while Merle was led down to the lowest of the castle dungeons.

Coming into a broad corridor the Monte Prince ascended a stone stairway until he came to a second hallway leading to the left, and this he followed, through innumerable turnings with which he seemed perfectly familiar, until he found himself still surrounded by stone walls, but in the gloom was banished the draperies of velvet and satin curtains which had concealed broad windows.

At a massive mahogany doorway, studded with silver nails, he pulled a bell-cord, and a servant in livery bade him enter.

"The Señora Guarena?"

"She is not here, señor," replied the servant.

"I will seek her there; now to with all haste and the surgeons of the castle to come hither; then bid the officers to allow no noise about the castle."

"Señor," and the servant, who was a pure Mexican, not of Spanish descent, but one of the race of the Indian Montezumas, darted away upon his errand, while the Monte Prince crossed the gorgeously-furnished apartment, and knocked at an inner door that was ajar.

No voice bade him enter, and he stepped within the room, which was used as a lavish half-bay sitting-room, and filled with a lavish display of creature comforts and luxuries.

The room was vacant, but a sweet voice called out from an adjoining *cabinet-de-toilette*.

"It is that you?"

"Lady Guarena, it is your very humble servant, Don Felipe."

The next instant there swept into the room a vision of rare loveliness—a woman of eighteen, voluptuous in form, beautiful in face, and a dark olive face tinted with crimson, and blue-black masses of hair coiled about her head.

She was exquisitely dressed in canary silk, *en train*, with a tight-fitting *basquina* that fitted her to perfection.

In her hair was a comb of sapphires, and a necklace of white pearls encircled her throat, while the white bands of rich yellow gold were upon her wrists.

Two rings only were upon her hand, a band of gold on her wedding finger, and upon the first finger of the same hand was the *solitaire* diamond—the one which the Monte Prince had taken from Zulah, the maid of stone Merle had sent to Mildred Merle.

At her wedding the Monte Prince had placed the rare gem upon her finger. *Of course he had a motive.*

This beautiful creature was the Señora Victoria Guarena—a three days' bride—an imperious beauty and haughty, who had loved the reckless, bold, unscrupulous man she had married.

"Don Felipe!" exclaimed the lovely woman, as her eyes fell upon the Monte Prince, a man whom she feared, yet admired, was ever glad to see, yet always held the wish that he had remained away.

His magnificent present to her, the night of her marriage, had been the cause of her *malice*.

She had heard he was a professional gambler; that he played an unfair game, and had killed a man who cursed him after he had won his last *pesto*.

But he was ever courtly, ever brilliant in conversation, the cleverest man—he, who fascinated her as a snake and a bird.

"Señora Victoria, I am here as the forerunner of ill tidings. Come, sit down here, and let me tell you that which will pain your heart to the core."

"Señor, I am your husband!" gasped the lovely bride, shriveling down like a *fantasma*.

"It is of Vistal who could speak—he is wounded."

"Wounded! *Santísima María!* Where is he?"

and the woman trembled violently.

"He will be soon here, and—"

"Don Felipe, you say that my husband is wounded, but you do not say *how*?" and a venomous flash came into the girl's dark eyes.

"It was in the *duelo*, a stranger to Vera Cruz ran his sword through his side."

"His sword! Why the Governor, Guarena, was the best swordsman in Mexico!" said the lady, proudly.

Don Merino, a *Ranchero* from Corpus Christi, proved to the contrary, lady; but you must be calm, for it will need all your strength to nurse him back to life."

"He is dangerously wounded, then, señor? Why did you not tell me this at once?" and the face grew pale.

"He is dangerously wounded, señora; but he will soon be brought here. Hold! I have made every arrangement for his reception, and the surgeons are summoned, and I would suggest that you change your *toilette* to receive him."

"I have a dress where life is at stake, and his life, señora."

"He is here," said the Monte Prince, as voices were heard, and he placed his hand upon the arm of the woman to restrain her impulse to rush forward and throw herself down beside her wounded husband.

"Be calm, or your excitement might prove fatal to him," he said, calmly, and she obeyed.

* The commandant of the Castle San Juan de Uloa is more properly called the Governor, no matter what may be his military rank.—THE AUTHOR.

The *Lanceros* marched into the room, still bearing their burden, and he was placed upon a cot, while the surgeons gathered around him.

The young bride gazed down into the white face, and her own was nearly as pale; but she uttered no cry as she knelt beside his knees beside the cot and lightly kissed the forehead.

"Señor!" and she looked imploringly up into the face of the chief surgeon.

"I will soon tell you, lady Guarena if there is hope," responded the surgeon, understanding her glance, and he set to work with his assistants to disconcert the tale the *Castle de Uloa* would soon be without a Governor.

"Sainted Maria! he has killed me!" groaned the wounded man as the Monte Prince lowered him to the ground.

"Aid me, or he will kill me!" suddenly cried Colonel Guarena, losing all nerve, and as he spoke there was heard the sound of hoof-strokes.

The Monte Prince turned quickly in the direction of the sound, but a cry from Colonel Guarena caused him to spring to his side. Merle had run him through the body to his side.

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